

Message Text

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DEPARTMENT PASS AIFLD AND AFL-CIO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, CI
SUBJ: LABOR MINISTER'S REACTION TO AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT

1. BRUCE JAY, AIFLD CPD AND EDWARD ARCHER, LABATT MADE A COURTESY VISIT TO LABOR MINISTER VASCO COSTA ON JUNE 13. THIS WAS THE FIRST AIFLD CONTACT WITH THE GOC SINCE THE AFL-CIO SOLIDARITY VISIT.

2. THE MINISTER WAS VERY SATISFIED WITH THE SOLIDARITY VISIT, SAYING THAT IT HAD OPENED DIRECT COMMUNICATION AFTER A PERIOD OF POOR OR LIMITED INFORMATION FLOWING TO THE AFL-CIO. HE WAS PARTICULARLY IMPRESSED WITH MR. GLEASON, REMARKING THAT HE HAD REPEATED TO CHILE'S ILO DELEGATION GLEASON'S COMMENT ON BEING A PATRIOT FIRST AND A TRADE UNIONIST SECOND WHEN CONFRONTED WITH INTERNATIONAL COMMUNISM.

3. VASCO COSTA REFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION OF FOLLOWING ITS PROGRAM OF STAGES TOWARD TRADE UNION NORMALIZATION, JUST AS PRESIDENT PINOCHET EXPLAINED TO THE DELEGATION. HE STATED THAT THERE WOULD BE COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH COMPULSORY ARBITRATION
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IN THE FIRST SEMESTER OF 1979 BUT WITHOUT UNION ELECTIONS. THERE COULD BE NO UNION ELECTIONS UNTIL AFTER A TRIAL PERIOD OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR FEAR THAT THE MARXISTS WOULD CAPITALIZE ON THESE OBJECTIONS. HE EXPRESSED HIS GREAT SATISFACTION WITH THE TECHNICAL BARGAINING SESSIONS THROUGH TRI-PARTITE COMMISSIONS, STATING THAT THEY GAVE EXCELLENT RESULTS.

4. HE REITERATED HIS CONCERN THAT THE AIFLD PROGRAM HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN DIRECTED AT TOO LIMITED A SPHERE. HE SAID THAT YOU CANNOT JUDGE THE UNION MOVEMENT FROM THE ACTIONS OF TWELVE OR FIFTEEN LEADERS WHEN YOU HAVE OVER 15,000 LEADERS IN THE COUNTRY. HE EXPRESSED REGRET AND PERSONAL AFFRONT THAT THE "GROUP OF TEN" REJECTED THE NEWLY CREATED "CONSEJO DE TRABAJO" (LABOR COUNCIL) AND REFUSED TO PARTICIPATE IN IT. HE CONSIDERED THE "CONSEJO" AS AN ESSENTIAL STAGE IN BRINGING IN COLLECTIVE BARGAINING NEXT YEAR

5. THE LABOR MINISTER REPEATED REMARKS MADE TO JESSE FRIEDMAN EARLIER THIS YEAR THAT HE HAD TO ACT AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS IN THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT; BUT ON THIS OCCASION HE CLARIFIED THIS BY SAYING THAT HE WAS ALSO REFERRING TO "THOSE DEMOCRATIC UNION LEADERS WHO WERE COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNISTS". (COMMENT: THE GOC HAS FREQUENTLY USED THIS TERMINOLOGY TO REFER TO THE "GROUP OF TEN"). THE LABOR MINISTER STATED THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO KNOW HOW THE AFL-CIO WOULD REACT TO THIS.

6. THE LABOR MINISTER SAID HE PERSONALLY IS ENCOURAGING THE GOC TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE AFL-CIO. JAY AGREED AND EMPHASIZED THE NEED TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE GOC AND AFL-CIO. JAY EN-

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COURAGED DIRECT CONTACT WITH AFL-CIO IN WASHINGTON, REMINDING THE MINISTER THAT AIFLD'S MISSION HERE IS TECHNICAL. JAY ALSO REITERATED BILL DOHERTY'S WILLINGNESS TO RETURN IN ORDER TO EXPOUND ON THESE FREE LABOR CONCEPTS.

7. JAY MADE NO ATTEMPT TO INTERJECT THE AFL-CIO POSITION IN RELATION TO THE VARIOUS POINTS MADE BY THE LABOR MINISTER. HE DID REFER TO THE SERIOUSNESS AND URGENCY WITH WHICH THE AFL-CIO VIEWS THE CHILEAN TRADE UNION SITUATION AND EMPHASIZED THE ANTI-COMMUNIST, INDEPENDENT POSTURE OF THE AFL-CIO AND ITS COMPLETE SEPARATION FROM ANY OTHER PRESSURES THAT THE GOC MIGHT BE CONFRONTING AT THIS TIME.

8. COMMENT: THE MINISTER WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL BUT INFLEXIBLE. HE REPEATEDLY ASKED FOR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE GOC WAS FOLLOWING A LOGICAL PROCESS TO TRANSFORM A HIGHLY POLITICIZED LABOR MOVEMENT INTO A TECHNICAL ONE. THE MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT THIS TRANSFORMATION WAS JUST BEGINNING, WITH THE PUBLICATION OF THE FIRST PART OF THE LABOR CODE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LABOR

COUNCIL, AND WOULD TAKE SEVERAL YEARS -- COLLECTIVE
BARGAINING EARLY NEXT YEAR AND TRADE UNION ELECTIONS
AT SOME INDEFINITE DATE THEREAFTER. THAT THE MEETING
TOOK PLACE AT ALL IS, WE BELIEVE, DUE TO THE IMPACT
OF THE AFL-CIO VISIT AS THE LABATT HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING
TO ARRANGE A COURTESY CALL FOR FIVE MONTHS.
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